

American Media Reception--RTF 386
Unique # 06775
TH 9:30-12:30 CMA 3.108
M 7:30-10:00--CMA 3.120

Fall 1999
UT-G
{syl-47}

Janet Staiger
CMA 6.128, 471-6653, jstaiger@uts.cc.utexas.edu
Office Hours: Th 2:00pm-4:00pm

AMERICAN MEDIA RECEPTION

Course Prerequisites

1. Consent of instructor
2. Graduate standing

Course Content and Goals

We will attempt to survey the research on the historical reception of film, radio, and television in the United States from its beginnings to present. This daunting project will be made easier by the many gaps that need to be filled. Sample topics will be: issues about real spectators of early films, the public functions of radio in the 1920s, stars and fan productions, romances, gay readings of the classical era, African-American responses to mainstream programs, and so forth. The first couple weeks will be an intensive survey into theories of spectators and how to research this vexed historiographical problem. This course is not for people who hold the text sacred. We will be focusing on what people do with films, radio, and television, not necessarily what we as academic scholars think they ought to do.

Readings

Assigned readings are available as follows:

At bookstores and on overnight reserve at the Perry-Castaneda Library

Ang, Ien. Watching Dallas.

Barker, Martin and Kate Brooks. Knowing Audiences.

Hebdige, Dick. Subculture: The Meaning of Style.

Jenkins, Henry. Textual Poachers.

Stacey, Jackie. Star Gazing.

Staiger, Janet. Interpreting Films.

Taylor, Helen. Scarlett's Women.

At Longhorn's (26th and Guadalupe) in two course packets:

Packet I--Weeks 1-6

Packet II--Weeks 7-15

Course Requirements and Grading

Required for this course are an active participation in class discussion; careful reading of texts and viewing of the films; one classroom presentation on readings assigned for the week; a series of activities related to the successful completion of an original research paper; and help to your colleagues as they prepare their research papers.

1. Class participation (20%)

Quality discussion includes asking good questions as well as offering interpretations or analysis of the material. Synthesizing, advising, and directing others to maximize their efforts is important.

2. Classroom Presentation on Material (10%)

You will be responsible for presenting a 15-minute maximum presentation of part of one week's reading material, and then opening up the discussion by setting out 3 or 4 questions for the group to consider during discussion. I will help facilitate during the discussion phase of the class.

3. Draft of research paper (20%)

DUE Monday, November 22, Noon, to team and me.

Late papers will not be accepted.

4. Responses to your Team's Research Paper Drafts (10%)

DUE Wednesday, November 24, Noon, to me.

Late papers will not be accepted.

5. Final draft of research paper (40%).

DUE Thursday, December 9, Noon, to me.

Late papers are not possible.

Film screenings are free. Your course fees have paid for them.

No incompletes in the course unless a real crisis occurs. In that case, do not hesitate to talk with me as soon as possible.

Students will have an opportunity to evaluate the course at its conclusion.

SYLLABUS

WK	DATE	CLASS
1	8-26	Introduction Staiger, <i>Interpreting Films</i> (1992), 3-97
2	8-30	Theoretical and Methodological Possibilities Screening (ca. 120m) Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show (1902, E. S. Porter, 3m) Before the Nickelodeon (1983, Charles Musser) The Finish of Brigit McKeen (1902) Terrible Teddy, The Grizzly King (1901) Sampson-Schley Controversy (Aug-Sept 1901) Taking President McKinley's Body from the Train, Canton, Ohio (1901) Execution of Czolgosz (Oct 1901) Elephants Shooting the Chutes (1904) Trapeze Disrobing Act (1901, Porter, 1m) Uncle Tom's Cabin (1903, Porter, 20m) The Suburbanite (1904, Biograph, 8m) The Unexpected Guest (1909, Lubin, 15m) A Florida Enchantment (1914, Vitagraph, 45m)
	9- 2	Class Hebdige, <i>Subculture</i> (1979), 5-19, 73-127 Bennett, "Text and Social Process" (1982), 3-14 Radway, "Interpretive Communities and Variable Literacies" (1984), 465-86 Ellsworth, "Illicit Pleasures" (1986), 45-56 Jenkins, <i>Textual Poachers</i> (1992), 9-85 Crawford and Chaffin, "The Reader's Construction of Meaning" (1986), 3-30 Hojjer, "Reception of Television Narration" (1992), 283-304
3	9- 6	Early Cinema and its Spectators No Screening--Labor Day
	9- 8	Class Mayne, "Immigrants and Spectators" (1982), 32-41 Gunning, "The Cinema of Attraction" (1986), 63-70 Staiger, <i>Interpreting Films</i> (1992), 101-23 Staiger, <i>Bad Women</i> (1995), 72-74 Brasell, "A Seed for Change" (1997), 3-21
4	9-15	The Birth of a Nation Controversy Screening The Birth of a Nation (1915, D. W. Griffith)
	9-17	Class

- Carbine, "'The Finest Outside the Loop': Motion Picture Exhibition in Chicago's Black Metropolis, 1905-1928" (1990), 9-41
 Waller, "Another Audience: Black Moviegoing, 1907-16" (1992), 3-25
 Waller, "Black Nickelodeon" (1993), 28-31
 Ogiwara, "The Exhibition of Films for Japanese Americans in Los Angeles During the Silent Film Era" (1990), 81-87
 Simcovitch, "The Impact of Griffith's BIRTH OF A NATION on the Modern Ku Klux Klan" (1972), 45-54
 Berguist and Greenwood. "The Protest Against Racism: THE BIRTH OF A NATION in Ohio" (1974), 39-44
 Staiger, Interpreting Films (1992), 139-153
- 5 Early Broadcasting and its Publics
 9-22 Screening
 Foolish Wives (1922, Erich von Stroheim, 107m)
 9-24 Class
 Douglas, Inventing American Broadcasting, 1899-1922 (1987), 187-215, 292-314
 Covert, "'We May Hear Too Much': American Sensibility and the Response to Radio, 1919-1924" (1984), 199-220.
- 6 Stars, Fans, Desire, Self-Regulation, Production
 9-27 Screening
 Son of the Sheik (1926, George Fitzmaurice, 72m)
 9-30 Class
 Staiger, Interpreting Films (1992), 124-38
 Hansen, Babel and Babylon (1991), 243-94
 Studlar, This Mad Masquerade (1996), 150-98
 Stacey, Star Gazing (1994)
 Jenkins, Textual Poachers (1992), 152-276
 Staiger, "The Romances of the Blonde Venus" (1997), 5-20
- 7 Romance
 10- 4 Screening
 Gone with the Wind (1939, Victor Fleming, 222m)
 10- 8 Class
 Taylor, Scarlett's Women (1989)
 Radway, Reading the Romance (1984), 119-156
 RESEARCH QUESTION AND ONE-PAGE PROPOSAL DUE IN CLASS
- 8 "Alternative" Romance Readings in the Hollywood Era before 1970
 10-11 Screening
 A Star Is Born (1954, George Cuker, 154m)
 10-14 Class
 Noriega, "'Something's Missing Here!' Homosexuality and Film Reviews during the Production Code from 1934-1962" (1990), 20-41
 Staiger, Interpreting Films (1992), 154-177
 Doty, Making Things Perfectly Queer (1993), 39-62
 Weiss, "'A Queer Feeling When I Look at You': Hollywood Stars and Lesbian Spectatorship in the 1930s" (1992), 30-50
 Williamson, "'Draped Crusaders': Disrobing Gender in The Mark of Zorro" (1997), 3-16.
- 9 Art Cinema and the Avant Garde

- 10-18 Screening
 - Report (1965, Bruce Connor, 15m)
 - Days of Heaven (1978, Terrence Malick, 95m)
- 10-21 Class
 - Budd, "'The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari': Conditions of Reception" (1981), 41-9
 - Smythe, Lusk, and Lewis, "Portrait of an Art-Theater Audience" (1953), 28-50
 - Twomey, "Some Considerations on the Rise of the Art-Film Theatre" (1956), 239-47
 - Staiger, Interpreting Films (1992), 178-95
- 10 Comedy and Parody; Serials and Soap Operas
 - 10-25 Screening
 - All in the Family episode
 - Dallas episode
 - 10-28 Class
 - Staiger, Interpreting Films (1992), 196-209
 - Leckenby and Surlin, "Incidental Social Learning and Viewer Race: 'All in the Family' and 'Sanford and Son'" (1976), 481-94
 - Staiger, "All in the Family," Must See TV (forthcoming), ca. 41 ts pages
 - Ang, Watching Dallas (1982)
 - Katz and Liebes, "Decoding Dallas: Notes from a Cross-Cultural Study" [1984], 419-32
 - Brown, "Knowledge and Power: An Ethnography of Soap-Opera Viewers" (1991), 178-98
- 11 Neo-Hollywood Margins: Underground Movies, Camp, Pornography, Cult Movies
 - 11- 1 Screening
 - Batman episode
 - The Rocky Horror Picture Show (1975, Jim Sharman, 95m)
 - 11- 4 Class
 - Hoberman, and Rosenbaum, Midnight Movies (1983), 1-76, 174-213
 - Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp'" [1964], 275-92
 - Staiger, "Finding Community in the Early 1960s" (forthcoming), 61 ts pp
 - Austin, "Portrait of a Cult Film Audience: The Rocky Horror Picture Show" (1981), 43-54
 - Torres, "The Caped Crusader of Camp: Pop, Camp, and the Batman Television Series" (1996), 238-55.
 - Williams, Hard Core (1989), 85-92
 - Dyer, "Coming to Terms" (1985), 27-29
 - Waugh, "Gay vs. Straight," (1985), 30-35
 - Champagne, "'Stop Reading Films!'" (1997), 76-97
- 12 Black Images/Black Spectators
 - 11- 8 Screening
 - The Cosby Show episode
 - Shaft (1971, Gordon Parks, 100m)
 - 11-11 Class
 - Hillerman, Sacred Clowns (1993), 138-143
 - Carter, Kevin L. "Black Audiences don't watch, they talk to movies" (1996), E6
 - Cripps, "Amos 'n' Andy and the Debate Over American Racial Integration" (1983), 33-54
 - Friedman, "Responses of Blacks and Other Minorities to Television Shows of the 1970s about Their Groups" (1978), 85-102

- hooks, "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators" (1993), 288-302
 Fazal and Wober, *The Cosby Show: Some Black and White Audience Perceptions and Possibilities* (1989)
 Staiger, "The Cosby Show," *Must See TV* (forthcoming), ca. 25 ts pages
 Brown and Schulze, "The Effects of Race, Gender, and Fandom on audience Interpretations of Madonna's Music Videos" (1990), 88-102
- 13 Violence
 11-15 Screening
 Judge Dredd (1995, Danny Cannon, 96m)
 11-18 Class
 Barker and Brooks, *Knowing Audiences* (1998)
- 14 Conclusions
 11-22 NOON: RESEARCH PAPER DRAFT DUE TO YOUR TEAM AND ME
 No screening
 11-24 NOON: TEAM'S RESPONSES DUE TO ME TO RETURN TO YOU
 11-25 No Class--Thanksgiving
- 15 Conclusions
 11-29 No Screening
 12- 2 Class--conclusions
- Finals Week
 12- 9 NOON: RESEARCH PAPERS DUE

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Books ordered at Bookstore and placed on overnight reserve at Perry-Castaneda Library
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- Barker, Martin and Kate Brooks. *Knowing Audiences: Judge Dredd, Its Friends, Fans and Foes*. Luton, England: University of Luton Press, 1998.
- Hebdige, Dick. *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London: Methuen, 1979. [To read pp. 5-19, 73-127]
- Jenkins, Henry. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture*. NY: Routledge, 1992. [To read pp. 9-85, 152-276.]
- Stacey, Jackie. *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship*. London: 1994.
- Staiger, Janet. *Interpreting Films: Studies in the Historical Reception of American Cinema*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1992.
- Taylor, Helen. *Scarlett's Women: Gone with the Wind and its Female Fans*. New Brunswick, NJ: 1989.
- Reading packet
- Austin, Bruce A. "Portrait of a Cult Film Audience: The Rocky Horror Picture Show," *Journal of Communications* 31 (1981), 43-54.
- Bennett, Tony. "Text and Social Process: The Case of James Bond," *Screen Education*, no. 41 (Winter/Spring 1982), 3-14.
- Berguist, Goodwin and James Greenwood. "The Protest Against Racism: THE BIRTH OF A NATION in Ohio," *Journal of the University Film Association*, 26, no. 3 (1974), 39-44.
- Brasell, R. Bruce. "A Seed for Change: The Engenderment of A Florida Enchantment," *Cinema Journal* 36, no. 4 (Summer 1997), 3-21.
- Brown, Jane and Laurie Schulze. "The Effects of Race, Gender, and Fandom on audience Interpretations of Madonna's Music Videos," *Journal of Communication* 40, no. 2 (Spring 1990), 88-102.
- Brown, Mary Ellen. "Knowledge and Power: An Ethnography of Soap-Opera Viewers," in *Television Criticism: Approaches and Applications*, ed. Leah R. Vandenberg and Lawrence A. Wenner. NY: 1991. Pp. 178-98.

- Budd, Michael. "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari: Conditions of Reception," *Cin.,-Tracts*, 3, no. 4 (Winter 1981), 41-9.
- Carbine, Mary. "'The Finest Outside the Loop': Motion Picture Exhibition in Chicago's Black Metropolis, 1905-1928," *camera obscura*, no. 23 (May 1990), 9-41.
- Carter, Kevin L. "Black audiences don't watch, they talk to movies," *Austin American-Statesman*, 26 July 1996, p. E6.
- Champagne, John. "'Stop Reading Films!' Film Studies, Close Analysis, and Gay Pornography," *Cinema Journal* 36, no. 4 (Summer 1997), 76-97.
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- Crawford, Mary and Roger Chaffin. "The Reader's Construction of Meaning: Cognitive Research on Gender and Comprehension," in *Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts*, ed. Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocínio P. Schweickart. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986. Pp. 3-30.
- Cripps, Thomas. "Amos 'n' Andy and the Debate Over American Racial Integration," in *American History/American Television: Interpreting the Video Past*, ed. John E. O'Connor. NY: 1983. Pp. 33-54.
- Doty, Alexander. *Making Things Perfectly Queer: Interpreting Mass Culture*. Minneapolis, MN: 1993. Pp. 39-62.
- Douglas, Susan. *Inventing American Broadcasting, 1899-1922*. Baltimore, MD: 1987. "Popular Culture and Populist Technology: The Amateur Operators, 1906-1912" and "The Social Construction of American Broadcasting, 1912-1922," pp. 187-215, 292-314.
- Dyer, Richard. "Coming to Terms: Male Gay Porn," *Jump Cut* 30 (1985), 27-29.
- Ellsworth, Elizabeth. "Illicit Pleasures: Feminist Spectators and Personal Best," *Wide Angle* 8, no. 2 (1986), 45-56.
- Fazal, S. and W. Wober. *The Cosby Show: Some Black and White Audience Perceptions and Possibilities*. London: Independent Broadcasting Authority, Nov 1989.
- Friedman, Norman F. "Responses of Blacks and Other Minorities to Television Shows of the 1970s about Their Groups," *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 7, no. 1 (1978), 85-102.
- Gunning, Tom. "The Cinema of Attraction: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde," *Wide Angle*, 8, no. 3/4 (1986), 63-70.
- Hansen, Miriam. *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*. Cambridge, MA: 1991. Pp. 243-94.
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- Hoberman, J. and Jonathan Rosenbaum. *Midnight Movies*. NY: 1983. Pp. 1-76, 174-213.
- Holjer, Birgitta. "Reception of Television Narration as a socio-cognitive process: A Schema-theoretical outline," *Poetics* 21 (1992), 283-304.
- hooks, bell. "The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators," in *Black American Cinema*, ed. Manthia Diawara. NY: 1993. Pp. 288-302.
- Katz, Elihu and Tamar Liebes. "Decoding Dallas: Notes from a Cross-Cultural Study," [1984], rpt. in *Television: The Critical View*, ed. Horace Newcomb. NY: 1987. Pp. 419-32.
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- _____. *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy and Popular Literature*. Chapel Hill, NC: U of North Carolina Press, 1984. Pp. 119-156.
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- _____. "Finding Community in the Early 1960s: Underground Cinema and Sexual Politics" (forthcoming), 61 ts pp.
- _____. *Must See TV: Blockbuster Sitcoms in the Network Era*. (forthcoming)
- _____. "The Romances of the Blonde Venus: Movie Censors versus Movie Fans," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1997), 5-20.
- Studlar, Gaylyn. *This Mad Masquerade: Stardom and Masculinity in the Jazz Age*. NY: Columbia UP, 1996. Pp. 150-98.
- Torres, Sasha. "The Caped Crusader of Camp: Pop, Camp, and the Batman Television Series," in *Pop Out: Queer Warhol*, ed. Jennifer Doyle, Jonathan Flatley and Jos, Esteban Muñoz. Durham, NC: 1996. Pp. 238-55.
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- _____. "Black Nickelodeon," *Black Film Review*, 7, no. 4 (1993), 28-31.
- Waugh, Tom. "Gay vs. Straight: Men's Pornography," *Jump Cut* 30 (1985), 30-35.
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- Williams, Linda. *Hard Core: Power, Plesure, and the "Frenzy" of the Visible*. Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1989. Pp. 85-92.
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